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OX CART

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(S) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

September 6, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Deputy Under Secretary of State
for Political Affairs

The Deputy Secretary of Defense


The Director of Central Intelligence

Special Assistant to the President
(Mr. Moyers)

Special Assistant to the President
(Mr. Rostow)

SUBJECT: OXCART Reconnaissance of Cuba

Attached is a proposal by the Central Intelligence Agency to use the OXCART aircraft over Cuba. It is submitted for early consideration by the 303 Committee.


James Q. Reber
Acting Director
National Reconnaissance Office

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: AUG 2007

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**PROPOSAL FOR
USE OF
OXCART OVER
CUBA**

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I. PROPOSAL

A. It is proposed to use the OXCART vehicle over Cuba in order to:

1. Exercise its operational capability.
2. Confirm capability to operate in heavily defended areas of national interest when the need arises.
3. Evaluate defensive environment reaction and capability against OXCART.
4. Obtain higher resolution photography.

B. Two missions per month for two months will be flown. Analysis of results and requirements will determine scope and frequency of subsequent OXCART overflights of Cuba.

C. This proposal should not negate current FSLR/CRC and overflights of Cuba.

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II. OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

A. At this time the CIA is maintaining a posture to conduct aerial reconnaissance of Cuba with OXCART on a one-week advance notice notification basis. During this period necessary coordination of supporting procedures and preparation of supporting facilities will be accomplished. Once these preparatory actions are completed, a capability to conduct operational missions on a twenty-four hour alert generation concept will be maintained.

B. Missions will be planned so as to cover the maximum number of Cuban targets on each overflight. As is shown on the typical route attached, essentially the entire island of Cuba could be photographed on one flight, provided the weather is favorable. The OXCART will launch and recover at base utilizing two refuelings. The departure and withdrawal portions of the mission will be flown at Mach 2.9 (1660 knots). Penetration of denied territory will be accomplished at Mach 3.1 (1780 knots) and at 76,000 feet or above. Emergency/alternate bases have been designated within the continental United States in the event of a missed air refueling or emergency. It is highly unlikely that OXCART would require an emergency landing outside continental United States.

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C. The OXCART will not bear USAF military markings and all flights will be flown by CIA civilian contract pilots.

D. Coordination with NORAD and FAA will be accomplished for suppression of friendly radars. Search and rescue will be furnished by the Air Rescue Service.

E. This OXCART operation over Cuba will not degrade "BLACK SHIELD" capability for OXCART overflight contingency for S.E. Asia.

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III. CUBAN AIR DEFENSE

A. Cuban Air Defense capability poses no measurable threat to OXCART in its operational environment because of the OXCART's high speed, high altitude, low radar cross section, and sophisticated ECM (Electronic Countermeasures) equipment.

B. OXCART will be flown with a mix of the following ECM systems:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>
PIN PEG	Passive Direction Finder	
BIG BLAST	Noise Jammer	
BLUE DOG	Missile Guidance Jammer	
MAD MOTH	Deception Jammer	

C. It is expected that OXCART will be detected by the Early Warning system at a range of 150 to 180 miles from Cuba.

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Continuous tracking is likely. Whether or not the Cubans would attempt to counter OXCART with the SA-2 is difficult to assess, however, it is possible that the Soviets might encourage such an action in order to gain data and experience against a supersonic threat.

D. Although the accompanying sonic boom will probably be heard during overflights, it is not expected to create undue interest since the Cuban aircraft inventory includes supersonic aircraft.

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IV. CUBAN CLIMATOLOGY

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

A. Mean cloud cover over Cuba is approximately fifty percent and this average does not vary greatly from month to month. Diurnal and topographic differences in cloud cover are more significant than seasonal changes.

B. The higher elevations have more cloudiness than the coastal areas, and in general, the eastern half of the island is clearer than the western half.

C. The clearest time of day is morning with 1000 hours being the most favorable for reconnaissance. Completely clear skies are uncommon as some clouds exist at all hours. During the mid-afternoon, cloud cover is often twice as great as in the morning.

D. September is the height of the hurricane season for Cuba. At least one storm should affect Cuba in September and the island could be overcast for up to a week.

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V. COVER/CONTINGENCY PLAN

The cover/contingency plan for the proposed mission will be essentially that approved by the Interdepartmental Contingency Planning Committee, subject: "Interdepartmental Contingency Plan for Project SKYLARK," BYE 2205-65, dated: 10 February 1966.

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SAMPLE MISSION 2 A/R
PRE/POST STRIKE

CHARLOTTE IS.

Vancouver

CANADA

UNITED STATES

MISSION SUMMARY

SPEED MACH 2.90/3.10
PENETRATION ALT 76,000 FT
DISTANCE 5074 NM
TIME 4:52 HRS
FUEL RESERVE 7500 LBS
TIME OVER DENIED 17 MINUTES

OVERALL ROUTE
REFUELING AREAS
ALTERNATES

Clipperton I.

GUATEMALA
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA

COSTA RICA
CANAL ZONE
PANAMA

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Puerto Rico

Antigua
Guadeloupe
Dominica

Martinique
Saint Lucia
Barbados

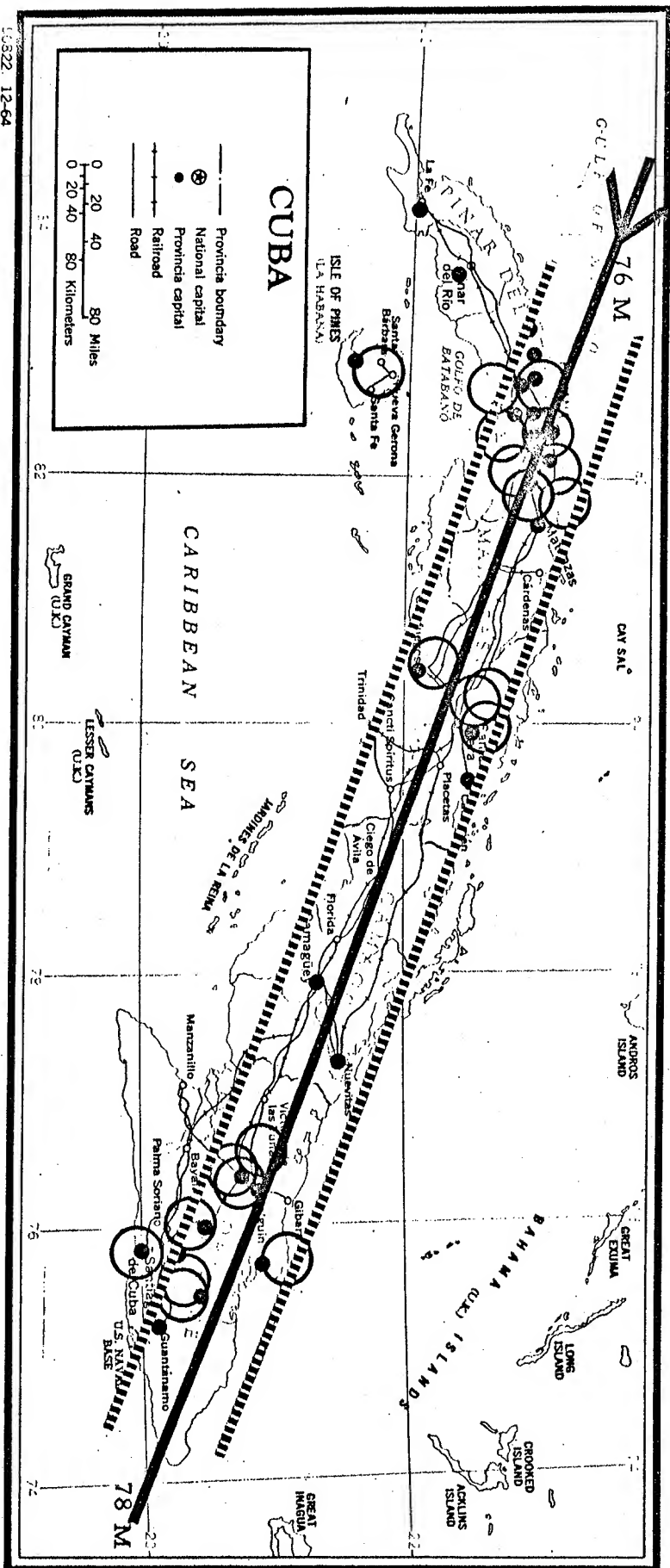
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AND TOBAGO
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SURINAM

COLOMBIA

FRENCH GUIANA

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CAMERA SWATH OF 27 NM EITHER SIDE OF TRACK
 WITH GROUND RESOLUTION OF 2.5 FEET OR BETT
 TIME OVER DENIED TERRITORY 17 MINUTES
 23 TARGETS COVERED



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TARGET

SA-2

CAMERA SWATH

OXCAR

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